

SUCCESS STORY

Supporting International Week of the Deaf Through Multi-Park Collaboration



Matt Connelly
Seasonal Park Guide
Golden Gate Recreational Area

Matt Connelly is a seasonal park guide at Golden Gate Recreational Area in NPS' Interior Region 10. His expertise lies in media and accessibility, social media, and visual media. Matt is also a member of the American Sign Language in the NPS group (ASL) on the CLP Commons, and recently began taking sign language classes.

Challenge

International Week of the Deaf is a global event, held annually, to raise awareness about the Deaf Community. Given NPS' commitment to making programs and services accessible for all visitors and employees, Matt knew he wanted to participate in this year's advocacy efforts. He had come across and was inspired by videos produced the year prior for International Week of the Deaf by Badlands National Park and Saguaro National Park. He also had experience collaboratively producing a video that featured staff from different parks, commemorating Buffalo Soldiers Day and the role and impact of buffalo soldiers on local communities. With this inspiration and experience, Matt knew it could be impactful to produce a video that featured signing rangers and volunteers from multiple units across the NPS to help bring attention to International Week of the Deaf.

“Prior to the ASL group forming on the CLP, I wouldn't have known how to run with this idea. I wouldn't have been able to easily find people across the NPS who sign. The CLP – and this great group of folks – made this possible.”

Solution

As a member of the ASL group on the CLP Commons, Matt recognized that there are a fair amount of people across the NPS who sign and who could potentially collaborate with him on producing the video. With the hope of getting multiple sites involved and represented in the video, he began by posting his idea in the ASL group to see who would be interested in helping him. His requirements: Individuals be open to a 1-hr planning call, have a ranger/volunteer at their park who signs, and commit to recording 10-15 seconds of video (no fancy camera or video editing skills needed!). The momentum grew from there.

Once he had gathered collaborators for the video, Matt used a combination of the CLP ASL group forum, email, and Google documents to plan and produce the video. He used the ASL group forum to revise the script, discuss what footage should be captured for the B-roll, provide guidance on how best to capture a video clip, share and receive feedback on the draft video, and brainstorm how best to promote the final video.

Once filming was complete, Matt edited the video based on the footage collected and created video files that were available to each park to post on their social media accounts. Upon a group recommendation, Matt also reached out to one of NPS' social media specialists to see about posting the video across NPS' national communication channels.

Outcome

All in all, Matt and his collaborators brought this idea to fruition in 3 months. To date, the video has received over 170,000 views via the NPS' communication channels and has been shared widely. His collaborators include individuals from across various divisions – including law enforcement, administration, interpretation, and media – and represent the following parks: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Great Falls Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Joshua Tree National Park, Knife River Indian Villages, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Yosemite National Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, and Charles Pinckney National Historic Site.

Matt credits the success of the video to every collaborator being enthusiastic and willing to carve out time during their busy summer season to make this happen.

